

Message Text

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16

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FM AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8461

INFO AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

UNCLAS OUAGADOUGOU 1829

AFDROUGHT

E.O. 11652: N/A

SUBJECT: FDRC REPORT ON SAHEL DROUGHT

REF: STATE 163540

1. FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS IN REPLY TO REFTEL
REQUEST FOR DATA ON GOUV CONTRIBUTIONS FOR DROUGHT
RELIEF ACTIVITIES 1973-74.

2. AS DESPERATELY POOR COUNTRY EVEN IN NON-DROUGHT
TIME, UPPER VOLTA HAS BEEN ABLE TO FURNISH ONLY
LIMITED AID, MOSTLY IN FORM OF MANPOWER. MAIN PARTICI-
PANT IN DROUGHT RELIEF ACTIVITIES HAS BEEN VOLTAN ARMY
WHICH WAS PUT IN CHARGE OF INTERNAL TRANSPORTATION AND
ADMINISTRATION OF FOOD DISTRIBUTION POINTS IN OUTLAYING
VILLAGES. ARMY OFFICERS ALSO DIRECT NATIONAL SUB-
COMMITTEE FOR THE DROUGHT WHICH IS CHIEF CO-ORDINATING
POINT WITHIN GOVERNMENT FOR RELIEF ACTIVITIES. ARMY
ENGINEERS ARE PRESENTLY UNDETAKEING ROAD REPAIRS IN
NORTHERN PART OF COUNTRY. OTHER PRIMARY SOURCE OF MAN-
POWER FOR RELIEF ACTIVITIES IS RED CROSS VOLUNTEERS
WHO HELPED OUT DURING 1973 AIRDROPPING OPERATION AND
ARE PRESENTLY PROVIDING MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN NORTHERN
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OUTLYING REGIONS. VOLTAN CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS,

NOTABLY SOS SAHEL, HAVE CONTRIBUTED LIMITED AMOUNTS OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR DROUGHT VICTIMS. ALTHOUGH GOUV HAS NOT MADE ANY DIRECT BUDGETARY OUTLAYS FOR DROUGHT RELIEF, 1974 BUDGET EXEMPTS CITIZENS IN VOLTAN SAHEL FROM PAYING HEAD AND LIVESTOCK TAXES. GOVERNMENT ALSO EXEMPTS CONTRACTORS WORKING IN SAHEL FROM PAYING EXCISE TAXES. FOREGONE REVENUES, ABOUT 200-300 MILLION CFA, WILL BE COVERED BY DIRECT BUDEGTARY CONTRIBUTIONS FROM EEC AND FRANCE.

3. EMBASSY ROUGHLY ESTIMATES 1973 DOLLAR LOSSES TO UPPER VOLTA AS RESULT OF DROUGHT AT BETWEEN DOLS 60-80 MILLION. THIS IS APPROXIMATELY 18-24 PERCENT OF THE GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT. THESE FIGURES TAKE INTO ACCOUNT A) LOSS IN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, BOTH FOR SUBSISTENCE AND CASH CROPS, OWING TO EXTREMELY POOR 1973 HARVEST, B) LOSS OF ABOUT TWENTY PERCENT OF TOTAL LIVESTOCK HERD (CATTLE ARE UPPER VOLTA'S MAIN EXPORT). MORE PRECISE FIGURES ARE NOT AVAILABLE.GRAHAM

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